

CA20N  
Z 1  
-74T50  
#17



BRIEF TO THE ROYAL COMMISSION  
ON METROPOLITAN TORONTO  
BY A GROUP OF TRUSTEES  
OF THE TORONTO BOARD OF EDUCATION

#17





BRIEF

to

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON METROPOLITAN TORONTO

by


A GROUP OF TRUSTEES

of the

TORONTO BOARD OF EDUCATION

January 31, 1964





Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2025 with funding from  
University of Toronto

<https://archive.org/details/31761120646245>

To: THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON METROPOLITAN TORONTO

The purpose of a good educational system is the education of the child. Our schools have become "child-centred" schools and we attempt to develop the whole child. "The object of educational administration should be to enable the right pupils to receive the right education from the right teachers, at a cost within the means of the State, under conditions which will enable the pupils best to profit by their training." (Sir Percy Meadon, quoted in the Report of the Ontario Commission on Education 1950 - P. 199 of the so-called Hope Commission)

The aim of education in a democracy is two-fold, first, to produce the type of citizen found desirable by the society concerned; and second, to provide for growth beyond the type, this being the only way in which a democratic society can grow. (See Hope Commission Report, P. 180) For such growth there must be democratic local control over education and provision for experimentation, and the latter is best provided under democratic local control. In fact, democratic local control is necessary for vitalizing the educational administration.

Therefore in considering the administration of education in Metropolitan Toronto, the welfare of the child must transcend all other considerations such as the claim that the central administration would be more efficient and economical. Democratic local control must be ensured for the same reasons.





Equalization of educational opportunity should be afforded to every child in Metropolitan Toronto as is strongly supported by the Metropolitan Toronto School Board brief.

Basing its arguments on the above philosophy, this brief is presented by a group of Trustees of the Toronto Board of Education who do not agree with the majority of the Board that amalgamation of all school boards into one centralized board is the best solution at the present time for the current problems of the Metropolitan School Board, the Toronto Board, and the ten other local school boards.

This brief relies greatly on the brief of the Toronto Board for its information, and reference will be made to much of its material. In the said Brief, the defects of the present educational organization in Metro are classed under four main headings:

- (I) Inequitable distribution of financial burdens.
- (II) Problems of teacher recruitment.
- (III) Inequities in implementation of the Metro principle.
- (IV) Persisting municipal boundary problems.

It is submitted by this Group that a better approach, and a less drastic one, than amalgamation would be:

- (a) A consolidation of the eleven local boards of education into four or five local boards of education.
- (b) Changes in the present organization, and an increase in the authority of the Metropolitan School Board.
- (c) Legislation to provide for a uniform salary scale for teachers in Metro Toronto.
- (d) Equalization of the tax rate throughout Metropolitan Toronto.

The consolidation of the eleven local boards proposed is a consolidation into four or five boards. This proposal derives from the so-called Gathercole Report of November, 1961, which suggests that the thirteen Municipalities of Metro might be divided into four or five





boroughs. However, if the Commission recommends that the municipalities be consolidated into a certain number of boroughs or cities, then the school districts should probably be the same and have the same boundaries.

Each district or borough or city should have its own local school board, and the Metro Board could continue to obtain its members from the local boards.

It is suggested that the City of Toronto continue as one of the school districts, with its local board, because the Toronto Board has a long history of achievement in education and has pioneered in Research, Special Education, the Education Centre Library, and other fields, all of which are referred to in the Toronto Board's Brief. While it would continue to aid other boards in Metro and beyond, and continue as a member of the Metro Toronto Educational Research Council, it seems desirable that it should remain an entity for its local problems and for further exploratory work. To include East York, and Leaside, and maybe Swansea and Forest Hill into a Borough of Toronto would not change this identity too much. The other boards could do some exploratory work if they desired and it is such diversity that constitutes one of the arguments for a number of boards.

It is obvious that the smaller local boards would be eliminated by consolidation, and admittedly they are too small for efficient operation.

The Toronto Board with its roughly 100,000 pupils in 117 schools (elementary, secondary, vocational and commercial), with its





over 4,500 teachers (day and night) and 2,300 non-teaching staff, covering thereby nearly all specialties in education, and with its annual budget over \$50 million including a building programme of \$10 million dollars, is undoubtedly of quite a large size and produces a large scale administration, including large scale purchasing of supplies and the extensive use of computer systems for its statistical and accounting work. Therefore it does have all the economies of large scale administration with efficiency. It would seem that if such an administration were further enlarged, it would lose in efficiency by the multiplicity of supervision and by the top administrators losing touch with their subordinates.

As an example of consolidation the following is submitted:-

1. The School Boards of the Lakeshore, Weston and Etobicoke would consolidate into one district.
2. The North York Board would remain separate.
3. The Township of York would remain separate but with it might be included Swansea and Forest Hill.
4. The Toronto Board would remain separate, but in it would be included East York and Leaside which together could form a separate ward.
5. The Scarborough Board would remain separate.

#### ONE BOARD IS TOO LARGE

By the same token, it is felt that one amalgamated board is too large for efficient democratic operation. Nothing is said in the Toronto Board's Brief about how the one centralized board would operate.

If it is to operate by central control what would take place is a huge amalgamation of administrative staff, which would take time, create





many problems of transition, and be accomplished at great expense. The result would likely be some reduction in overhead, but this is not certain, for, as anyone knowing the complexity of the Toronto system itself will realize, such an amalgamation might very well become top-heavy in directors, assistant directors, and deputy assistant directors. This group feels that in an amalgamated school system, the top administrators could not keep in touch with the system in the same way as can be done in a system no larger or not much larger than Toronto's.

Business has had difficulties with bigness, and has countered the increased costs and diminishing returns of too large administrative units by decentralization, which someone has hailed as one of the great inventions of the Western World as against the monolithic structures of the Communist World.

Business has the advantage over civil administrations of having the curb of competition to keep costs down. Civil administrations, when they get large, have no such curb and when very large it is difficult to see where unnecessary costs exist.

#### OBJECTIONS TO AMALGAMATION WITH DECENTRALIZED ADMINISTRATION

On the other hand, if there are to be four or more districts under the one board, as has been mooted, some of the above objections to a centralized administration would not obtain.

There would have to be some central administrative control which would tend to top-heaviness. The main objection would be that each local school district would have no local board to set policy on





local matters and to check on the administration by the staff of that district.

School boards do more than set policy; like most administrative boards including business corporation boards, they receive reports and make some enquiry into the progress of the schools and what is happening and how new policy is being carried out, and generally oversee their domain. It would be practically impossible for one general board to oversee the administration in four or more school districts of Metro Toronto except with respect to general matters such as the building programme and teachers' salaries. This would leave in the hands of the local school-district director a tremendous amount of power both to set policy on local matters and to administer his district. Neither is desirable in a democratic system; as pointed out above, the community interest must be maintained for growth and vitality and to determine best the local needs and desires of the community.

The Hope Commission Report gives as one of its criteria on the nature and size of local boards - "Provision should be made to ensure that control of education is not removed too far from the local community". In this connection, the Commissioners state "our desire is to create and foster local interest in education", and "Provision should be made for local deviations from, and additions to the minimum programme." (Page 278)

Undoubtedly there are too many school boards in Ontario and in Metro Toronto. In England there is one school board for about 315,000 persons on the average, so that four or five school boards in Metro Toronto,





where the population is expected soon to be two million people, would not be too many by this standard.

#### NUMBER OF TRUSTEES

The school Board with its elected or appointed trustees was established in 1850 by Egerton Ryerson to keep the system in touch with the local conditions and to keep the parents in touch with the system. Even in a big city like Toronto this is achieved to a surprising extent by the two trustees from each ward who become familiar with the schools and principals and the Home & School Associations in their ward. Without being overly parochial, they try to see that conditions in their ward are looked after. When parents, pupils, or citizens have complaints which they feel the administrators have not handled to their satisfaction, they come to the trustees. In short, the trustees are the representatives of the people on the school board for the particular ward in the true sense.

It is submitted that to increase the size of the wards very much would be a backward step and not in the interests of democracy. If, as in the example above, the Borough of Toronto takes in East York and Leaside, these could form a new ward of the Borough, making ten wards, or the present City could be reduced to fewer wards by consolidating some of the smaller wards. The election of two trustees from each ward should be continued -- two, because in wards no smaller than the provincial or federal ridings there is more to do among the people of the ward, and when one trustee is busy, the other attends functions where the presence of a trustee has been requested.

and the other is a very good one and a little better.

It is not the same as the other one.

It is not the same as the other one.

The other one is a very good one and a little better.

It is not the same as the other one.

The other one is a very good one and a little better.

It is not the same as the other one.

The other one is a very good one and a little better.

It is not the same as the other one.

The other one is a very good one and a little better.

It is not the same as the other one.

The other one is a very good one and a little better.

It is not the same as the other one.

The other one is a very good one and a little better.

It is not the same as the other one.

The other one is a very good one and a little better.

It is not the same as the other one.

The other one is a very good one and a little better.

It is not the same as the other one.

The other one is a very good one and a little better.

It is not the same as the other one.

The other one is a very good one and a little better.

It is not the same as the other one.

The other one is a very good one and a little better.

It is not the same as the other one.

It has not been shown that the present Board of Education of Toronto with eighteen elected trustees and two appointed separate school trustees functions inefficiently. Using the committee system, as it does, it functions quite well for a political body, and by an improvement in the committee system it could function even better.

That a board of education has been and always should be a political body few can question. Therefore to streamline it to function like a business directorate is wrong. It may be that the present set-up as has existed in Metro Toronto with the Metro Board and eleven local boards is less cost-saving than a relatively small board for a large area, but it is certainly more democratic, and if we are not willing to pay a little more for democracy then let us despair. Such a board will also be more in touch with the local educational needs, and provide for the growth and experimentation mentioned at the beginning.

It may be trite to say this, but it bears repeating: the ordinary citizen often feels lost because things are so big he doesn't know where to look for help; he often doesn't know, for example, his legislative member. To create one Metro school board with a relatively small number of trustees would be another contribution to this lost feeling.

#### CONSULTATIVE COMMITTEES

Nor does this Group consider that the local needs will be satisfied and the community interest fostered by consultative committees as suggested in the brief of the Toronto Board. Such committees have no responsibility and usually soon lose interest.





The Advisory Vocational Committee, at least in Toronto, works well because its advisory members (the appointed) work with the elected trustees and have the power and responsibility to formulate policy and make decisions in the vocational education field, which decisions the full Board have, of course, power to accept or reject. The Committee's decisions cannot be disregarded as in the case of mere consultative committees.

DEFECTS IN PRESENT SYSTEM -- HOW TO DEAL WITH THEM

(I) INEQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF PROVINCIAL BURDENS

The City of Toronto has contributed more to Metro schools than it has received, because of its high assessment. This may continue for some time, as indicated by the Gathercole Report.

The statistics of 1959 which were used in the Gathercole Report showed that while the City of Toronto would lose with respect to the education taxes levied under amalgamation (a loss of \$1,429,330) and would lose less under consolidation into a five-borough organization (a loss of \$191,183) the City would have a net gain under amalgamation of \$1,847,766 because it would gain on the general purposes levy (\$3,277,096) which is more than it would lose under the education levy. Likewise under partial consolidation, a net gain over all (\$1,012,511) would accrue, but of a smaller amount. (See tables on page 34 and page 49 of the Gathercole Report.)

To see what the result would be today, the same painstaking care would have to be taken to work out the statistics.





The GATHERCOLE REPORT states on page 19:

"These statistics on expenditures and assessments also suggest that the City of Toronto would gain in any amalgamation or partial consolidation of the area municipalities through diverting some of its burden of higher expenditures to the other municipalities. While this would be the case in the short run, ultimately there would be a levelling up of expenditure in the area municipalities with the result that the City of Toronto's initial gain would be dissipated in the higher standards established for the other municipalities. Under amalgamation and to a lesser extent under partial consolidation, the per capita or per pupil spending in the area municipalities would be drawn closer together. All services would tend to gravitate toward the common standard, except where there were fundamental reasons for differences in services. - - - - - Nevertheless, there would be a rise in spending through bringing the standards of services established under amalgamation to a common level, and no doubt a smaller increase through evening up standards where certain area municipalities were consolidated."

If the conclusions from recent statistics show similar conclusions, and they very well might, amalgamation will not be much of an advantage for the City of Toronto over partial consolidation and, with respect to education, consolidation may be preferable. The suggested levelling would no doubt occur.

However, this Group suggests that the tax rate throughout Metropolitan Toronto be equalized for the reasons so ably presented in the Metropolitan Toronto School Board's Brief. If this be done, the above discussion on the effect of the tax burden by consolidation or amalgamation becomes academic.

#### Renovation Needs

The inequity, because the City of Toronto is not able to have Provincial grants for renovation of its many old schools, would be removed by a change of policy under the Provincial Government.

Alternatively, if the Metro Council would concede that some



portion of the cost of rehabilitation is a Metro responsibility, which it does not yet concede, this would help.

Under amalgamation, however, the City of Toronto would have less representation on the Metro Board and on the Metro Council, for it might have about  $1/6$  of the representation not almost  $\frac{1}{2}$  as now, or, if representation were based on population, not more than  $1/3$ . For solving local problems then, the City of Toronto might indeed be worse off.

## (II) PROBLEMS OF TEACHER RECRUITMENT

The competition for teachers, as set out in the Toronto Board's Brief, is not a good thing except for the teachers, although the higher salaries may do something to increase the supply of teachers. It is hard on the tax-payers. It can be corrected in two ways without resorting to amalgamation. (Amalgamation is like using a sledge hammer where a hammer will do.) One way, which may be enacted in 1964, is provincial legislation to provide an equalized salary scale in Metro. Another way would be to give the power to the Metro Board to set a salary scale throughout Metro.

If the Toronto Board considers that teachers find it more desirable to live and teach in the suburbs and if the Board wishes to counteract this by paying a bonus, it is more likely to succeed under the present system. Under amalgamation it would be difficult for the City representatives, out-numbered five to one or two to one on the Board, to obtain such a bonus from the suburban representatives.

The best way to attract teachers would be to have a better system





than the others, which, under amalgamation, Toronto soon could not have; whereas under partial consolidation there would be some levelling-up but Toronto could continue to pioneer.

(III)        INEQUITIES IN IMPLEMENTATION OF THE METRO PRINCIPLE

In the Toronto Board's Brief complaint is made that Metro co-operation on Specialized Education has now faded. But in a large system such as amalgamation would create, there would still be a great deal of co-operation needed -- it could not be legislated. Some persons in one school area now may or may not co-operate with their colleagues.

Transportation of children is similarly a matter for co-operation under any system.

Research is working fairly well under the Metropolitan Toronto Educational Research Council, but it may be, as suggested in the Metropolitan School Board's brief to this Commission, that if research were put under the Metropolitan School Board it would be able to co-ordinate all Metro educational research more effectively.

(IV)        PERSISTING MUNICIPAL BOUNDARY PROBLEMS

It is wishful thinking to believe that boundary problems will not persist under any system. Attendance areas now cut across municipal boundaries. It is only good social planning not to divide neighbourhoods, and under any system a great deal of regard would have to be given to the former municipal boundaries or the various neighbourhood





boundaries. In cases where relief from hardship should be accorded, as suggested in the Toronto Board's Brief, the Metro Board could work out a policy with the local boards to give such relief.

\*\*\*\*\*

#### DISADVANTAGES OF AMALGAMATION

Those disadvantages that have been mentioned are:

1. Too large for proper administration or too bureaucratic.
2. Not democratic.
3. Too much trouble and expense in changing right over to amalgamation.
4. Lack of diversity.

Toronto district could not for long continue to pioneer and experiment. By the same token, the other districts could not experiment either. There would be a tendency to uniformity, and diversity would greatly diminish. For example, the senior public school system in Toronto consists of one school in a district having only grades 7 and 8, which school is fed by junior schools in the area having grades 1 to 6; whereas in North York, etc., the junior high school system is in operation, which means that grades 7, 8, and 9 are housed together. Which is the better system? Time may tell. It may be that the net advantages of one are approximately equal to the net advantages of the other.

#### ADVANTAGES OF PARTIAL CONSOLIDATION

The advantages of a consolidation of the eleven school boards into four or five boards are the opposite of the disadvantages of amalgamation listed above. They are:



1. Consolidation would give strength to the small boards and make for larger units of a size not very much smaller than Toronto, which would not be too large for proper administration. The Lakeshore consolidated board has shown this, but under consolidation it would likely be merged with Weston and Etobicoke, as in the example given above.
2. More democratic -- each district would have its local board of elected trustees. From such trustees two could be appointed or elected to the Metro Board, or, if based roughly on population, the Toronto School District Board could send four or five trustees to the Metro Board and the others two each until such time as their respective populations approached the size of Toronto.
3. The expense and trouble of consolidating the existing areas into four or five districts and the administrative consolidation that would follow would be obviously much less severe than a complete amalgamation.
4. The strengthened local boards could deal with local problems.
5. There would be more room for diversity and experiment and, in particular, the Toronto Board could continue its excellent exploratory work.

The advantages that amalgamation would bring could all be obtained as well, or almost as well, by partial consolidation, by augmenting the Metro Board's power and/or by the legislative measures suggested above, by equalization of the tax rate throughout Metro and by a certain amount of co-operation which is necessary in any system. The continuance of democratic control under consolidation is the most compelling argument for consolidation.





In fact, if the proposed amalgamation would result in one Metro Board making general policy with administration de-centralized into four or more districts, it would appear that a consolidation into four or five districts with a local board for each district and a Metro board with co-ordinating power over building, teacher salaries, and distinctly metro-wide problems, would be definitely preferable. Such an organization as the latter would, as compared to the former, merely interpose a local board between the district and the Metro board, but what a difference it would make! It would prevent bureaucratic control of the local district and would carry on the tradition of democratic local control of and participation in education, which tradition is sound and desirable.

For the above reasons, this Group recommends partial consolidation along the above lines, the augmenting of the power of the Metro Toronto School Board, the equalization of the tax rate throughout Metro, and, if necessary to remove inequities not removed by the foregoing, removing such inequities either by legislation or change in governmental policy.

All of which is respectfully submitted,

" Ernest Jones "

" Monte H. Harris "

" L. Lockhart "

" B.G. Lowes "

" Alex C. Thompson "









